

Message Text

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6158
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 00499

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TSPA, CA, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET NOTES TO GOC CONCERNING COSMOS 954

1. IVAN HEAD, PRIME MINISTER'S SENIOR ADVISER ON INTER-NATIONAL AFFAIRS, PROVIDED DCM ON JANUARY 31 WITH TEXTS OF TWO OFFICIAL NOTES SENT TO GOC CONCERNING COSMOS 954. TEXTS ARE AS FOLLOWS.
2. THE FIRST MESSAGE REACHED SOVIET EMBASSY OTTAWA EVENING OF JANUARY 25 AND WAS DELIVERED TO HEAD BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR AT 0930 ON JANUARY 26.
3. BEGIN QUOTE. AT THE INSTRUCTION OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP THE FOLLOWING IS CONVEYED TO PRIME MINISTER, P.E. TRUDEAU.
4. "THE SOVIET SIDE, WHILE KEEPING A CONTINUOUS TRACK OF THE 'COSMOS-954' SATELLITE'S FLIGHT, DID NOT HAVE DATA ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS ENTRY INTO DENSE LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE OVER CANADA AND THE FALLING OF ANY OF ITS DEBRIS

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ON CANADIAN TERRITORY. ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES OF THE COMPUTER CO-ORDINATING CENTRE, THE SATELLITE WAS EXPECTED TO ENTER THE DENSE LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 24, 1978 (MOSCOW TIME), OUT OF THE RANGE OF THE SOVIET RADIO TRACKING MEANS OF OBSERVATION AND CEASE TO EXIST OVER THE HIGH SEAS IN THE AREA OF THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. ACCORDINGLY, THE RESPECTIVE INFORMATION WAS COMMUNICATED TO

THE UNITED STATES.

5. "IN VIEW OF THE FAULTY STATE FOF THE SATELLITE A POSSIBILITY WAS NOT EXCLUDED THAT SOME OF ITS PARTS THAT HAD NOT BURNED OUT COMPLETELY IN THE THICK LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE COULD REACH THE EARTH'S SURFACE. HOWEVER, IN THIS CASE ALSO, ACCORDING TD THE ESTIMATES, THEY SHOULD HAVE FALLEN OVER THE HIGH SEAS.

6. "IN VIEW OF THE INTEREST OF THE CANADIAN SIDE TO HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE POWER UNIT OF THE 'COSMOS-954' THE FOLLOWING IS COMMUNICATED IN ADDITION TO WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBMITTED. THE POWER UNIT TO SUPPLY POWER FOR THE ON-BOARD SYSTEMS WAS A SMALL REACTOR WORKING ON ENRICHED URANIUM-235.

7. "AS THE CANADIAN SIDE IS ALREADY AWARE, THIS UNIT WAS NON-EXPLOSIVE, AS THE CREATION OF THE CRITICAL MASS WAS EXCLUDED. THE UNIT'S DESIGN ENSURED ITS TOTAL DESTRUCTION AND BURNING-OUT AT THE ENTRY IN THE DENSE LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE. SUCH MEASURES, ACCORDING TO DESIGN DATA, ENSURE BURNING AND DISPERSION OF THE ACTIVE ZONE OF THE REACTOR TO PARTICLES OF SEVERAL TENS OF MICRONS IN DIAMETER WHICH EXCLUDES RADIATION IN EXCESS OF THE LEVELS RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR RADIATION PROTECTION.
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8. "IN CASE SOME OF THE DISINTEGRATED PARTS OF THE SATELLITE REACH THE EARTH'S SURFACE, AN INSIGNIFICANT LOCAL POLLUTION CAN RESULT ONLY AT THE PLACES OF THEIR IMPACT.

9. "AS TO THE METHODS OF SEARCH FOR POSSIBLE DEBRIS OF THE SATELLITE, THEY DO NOT DIFFER FROM GENERALLY ACCEPTED METHODS OF RADIATION EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION WITH THE USE OF USUAL RADIOMETRICAL MEANS.

10. "IN COMMUNICATING THIS INFORMATION THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT REITERATES ITS READINESS, SHOULD SOME PARTS OF THE SATELLITE ARE FOUND ON THE TERRITORY OF CANADA, TO RENDER URGENT ASSISTANCE IN ELIMINATING ANY POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES AND IN EVACUATING THE SATELLITE DEBRIS BY SENDING A GROUP OF SPECIALISTS WITH THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL MEANS.

11. "LIKEWISE, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE OBSERVATION DATA OF THE ENTRY OF THE SATELLITE INTO DENSE LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE CANADIAN SIDE. END QUOTE FIRST NOTE

12. THE SECOND NOTE WAS DELIVERED AT 1020 ON JANUARY 27.

13. BEGIN QUOTE. IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEW REQUEST OF THE CANADIAN SIDE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE POWER UNIT OF THE 'COSMOS-954' SATELLITE THE FOLLOWING IS COMMUNICATED AT THE INSTRUCTION FROM MOSCOW.

14. "THE SOVIET SIDE NOTES WITH SATISFACTION THAT THE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE 'COSMOS'954' WAS POSITIVELY RECEIVED BY THE CANADIAN SIDE AS THE PROOF OF CONSTRUCTIVE SOVIET-CANADIAN COOPERATION IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

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15. "IN OUR OPINION, THE INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE CANADIAN SIDE ENSURES THE EFFECTIVE SEARCH AND DISCOVERY OF THE SATELLITE'S REMNANTS, IF THEY HAVE IN FACT FALLEN ON THE CANADIAN TERRITORY, AS WELL AS THE NECESSARY MEASURES FOR ELIMINATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A CRASH IF THEY ARE NEEDED.

16. "AS TO THE SATELLITE'S POWER UNIT, WHICH WAS A SMALL REACTOR OO CYLINDRICAL FORM WORKING ON REGULAR ENRICHED URANIUM-235, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN COMMUNICATED, ITS DESIGN PROVIDED FOR ITS DISINTEGRATION AND THE COMPLETE BURNING UP IN THE THICK LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE.

17. "AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIET SIDE FINDS IT NECESSARY TO NOTE THAT FOR A SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION IN RESOLVING THE

QUESTIONS OUT OF THE CESSATION OF EXISTENCE OF THE
'COSMOS-954' A TWO-WAY EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IS DESIRABLE.
WHEREAS WE DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION FROM THE CANADIAN SIDE
REGARDING OBSERVATION OF THE SATELLITE'S ENTRY IN THE DENSE
LAYERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE, AS WELL AS THE NATURE OF THE
'SUSPICIOUS PHENOMENA' WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST
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REPORTS OF THE CANADIAN SIDE, WERE DISCOVERED IN THE
ATMOSPHERE AND ON THE GROUND. SUCH INFORMATION WOULD
ALLOW US TO EVALUATE MORE PRECISELY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF
THE ACCIDENT AND THE CESSATION OF EXISTENCE OF THE
'COSMOS-954' SATELLITE, WHICH IS, OBVIOUSLY, IN THE
INTERESTS BOTH OF THE SOVIET AS WELL AS OF THE CANADIAN
SIDE. END QUOTE SECOND NOTE

18. EXTAFF ACTION OFFICER ON THIS PROJECT COMMENTED TO
DCM, APROPOS THE FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE USSR, THAT
AT NO TIME HAVE THE SOVIETS EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
THE DEBRIS WHICH CAME DOWN IN CANADA IS IN FACT THE
REMNANTS OF COSMOS-954. THEREFORE, THE GOC IS NOT YET
CERTAIN WHETHER THE USSR WOULD ACCEPT RETURN OF THE DEBRIS
EVEN THOUGH GOC NOW PLANS IN DUE COURSE TO OFFER IT.
OBVIOUSLY, THE QUESTION OF REIMBURSEMENT FOR RETRIEVAL
COSTS IS ALSO BOUND UP IN THE SOVIET DECISION ON THIS
MATTER. ENDERS

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